

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-16 (Canceled).

17. (Currently Amended) A route guidance method for providing route guidance by engaging an information terminal that transmits information indicating a start point and a destination for a recommended route to an information distribution center and the information distribution center that obtains, through a route search calculation, route guide information ~~for a route from the start point to the destination, splits results of the search calculation and transmits the search calculation results~~ including route information and guide information for the recommended route and transmits the route guide information to the information terminal, the method ~~in installments when a predetermined condition exists,~~ comprising in sequence:

(a) a step in which a user is informed of an estimated download time for downloading the ~~search calculation results,~~ route guide information determined based upon a physical quantity indicating a data size of the ~~search calculation results~~ route guide information;

(b) a step in which the information terminal transmits a request to the information distribution center ~~information indicating an instruction by the user that the information distribution center to transmit the route guide information splits the search calculation results and transmits the search calculation results~~ in installments;

(c) a step in which upon receiving the ~~information indicating the instruction by the user that the search calculation results be split and transmitted in installments~~ request, the information distribution center extracts ~~search calculation results~~ a portion of the guide information corresponding to an area of the recommended route near the start point ~~from the search calculation results~~ and transmits the obtained route information in a batch and the extracted portion of the guide information ~~extracted search calculation results~~; and

(d) a step in which upon receiving the ~~search calculation results~~ extracted portion of the guide information corresponding to the area of the recommended route near the start point, the information terminal starts the route guidance.

18. (Currently Amended) A route guidance method according to claim 17, wherein:

~~the search calculation results include route information of the route from the start point to the destination and guide information used to indicate an~~

includes a guidance for advancing direction ~~and the like~~ at each guide point on the recommended route.

19. (Currently Amended) A route guidance method according to claim 18, wherein:

~~the search calculation results~~ portion of the guide information corresponding to the area near the start point ~~include at least~~ includes guide information for a block extending from the start point to a next guide point.

20. (Currently Amended) A route guidance method according to claim 17, wherein:

~~the physical quantity indicates a data size of the~~ route guide information is a data size of the guide information or a number of guide points contained in the guide information.

21. (Currently Amended) A route guidance method according to claim 17, wherein:

after starting the route guidance, the information terminal transmits to the information distribution center a request for remaining guide information, and[[.]]

the information distribution center extracts and transmits the remaining portion of the guide information.

22. (Currently Amended) A route guidance method according to claim 21, wherein:

~~the information terminal transmits to the information distribution center a request that the remaining guide information be distributed in units each corresponding to a guide point; and~~

each time the request for the remaining portion of the guide information is received, the information distribution center transmits guide information extracted in a unit corresponding to a guide point to the information terminal.

Claims 23-24 (Canceled).

25. (Currently Amended) A route guidance method for providing route guidance by exchanging information related to a recommended route from a start point to a destination between an information terminal and an information distribution center, comprising ~~in sequence~~:

(a) a step in which the information terminal transmits information indicating the start point and the destination to the information distribution center;

(b) a step in which the information distribution center obtains route guide information including route information and guide information for the recommended for a route from the start point to the destination through a route search calculation;

(c) a step in which the information distribution center extracts a first piece of the guide information for an area of the recommended route near the start point and a second piece of the guide information for a remaining area of the recommended route and transmits to the information terminal the route information contained in results of the search calculation in a batch and ~~transmits guide information contained in the results of the search calculation to the information terminal in installments by splitting~~ the first and second pieces of the guide information separately; and

(d) a step in which the information terminal starts the route guidance upon receiving from the information distribution center the route information included in the search calculation results and at least guide information for an area near the start point included in the search calculation results and transmitted in an installment and the first piece of the guide information.

26. (New) A route guidance method according to claim 25, wherein:

the guide information includes a guidance for advancing direction at each guide point on the recommended route.

27. (New) A route guidance method according to claim 25, wherein:

the first piece of the guide information includes at least a guidance for advancing direction at a next guide point to the start point.

28. (New) A route guidance method according to claim 25, wherein

the information distribution center extracts the first piece of the guide information upon receiving a request for splitting transmission of the route guide information from the information terminal, the request being issued based on an intention of a user who is informed of an estimated download time for the route guide information determined based on a physical quantity indicating a data size of the guide information or a number of guide points contained in the guide information.

29. (New) A route guidance method according to claim 25, wherein:

after starting the route guidance, the information terminal transmits to the information distribution center a request for the second piece of the guide information.

30. (New) A route guidance method according to claim 29, wherein:

each time the request for the second piece of the guide information is received, the information distribution center transmits the second piece of guide information extracted in a unit corresponding to a guide point to the information terminal.

31. (New) A navigation system, comprising:

an information terminal that transmits information indicating a start point and a destination for a recommended route; and

an information distribution center, including a server, that receives the information and obtains, through a route search calculation, route guide information including route information and guide information for the recommended route and transmits the route guide information to the information terminal,

wherein a user is informed of an estimated download time for downloading the route guide information, determined based upon a physical quantity indicating a data size of the route guide information;

wherein the information terminal is configured to transmit a request to the information distribution center to transmit the route guide information in installments;

wherein the information distribution center is configured to extract a portion of the guide information corresponding to an area of the recommended

route near the start point and transmit the obtained route information in a batch and the extracted portion of the guide information, upon receiving the request; and

wherein the information terminal is configured to start the route guidance upon receiving the extracted portion of the guide information corresponding to the area of the recommended route near the start point.

32. (New) A navigation system for providing route guidance by exchanging information related to a recommended route from a start point to a destination, the system comprising:

an information terminal that transmits information indicating the start point and the destination; and

an information distribution center, including a server, that receives the information and obtains route guide information including route information and guide information for the recommended route through a route search calculation,

wherein the information distribution center is configured to extract a first piece of the guide information for an area of the recommended route near the start point and a second piece of the guide information for a remaining area of the recommended route and transmit to the information terminal the route information in a batch and the first and second pieces of the guide information separately; and

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wherein the information terminal is configured to start the route guidance upon receiving from the information distribution center the route information and the first piece of the guide information.